Querencia

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Querencia

by StratsWrote, whiskeyandspite

Summary

“It’s perfectly human to feel emotions and express them,” Hannibal replied. Will snorted, though it was hardly a happy sound.

“Are you really psychoanalyzing me right now?”

“Merely stating a fact,” Hannibal told him.

Will has never felt that he deserves much of anything; not friendship or protection, not sex for himself, or personal enjoyment. Not Hannibal - certainly not Hannibal. But Hannibal feels differently, he feels that Will deserves the world, and creates a safe place for him to find himself, to be vulnerable, and to grow into the extraordinary creature Hannibal knows him to be.

Notes

For the wonderful person who won us on the Fandom Trumps Hate auction this year! Thank you for letting us loose with your idea hun, we had a ball!

A HUGE thank you to our beta - Alex! For wrangling our typos and em-dashing through our pieces!

See the end of the work for more notes

The first time Will cried — and knew it wasn't from injuries — he hid himself in the master bathroom and turned on the shower to mask the sound.

The emotion had come over him entirely unexpectedly, so much so that he hadn't even the slightest notion of what the emotion had *been.* One minute he and Hannibal had been preparing dinner, Will setting the table and pouring wine into a decanter at Hannibal's request, and the next his eyes were stinging and his vision was blurry and his chest felt tight and he couldn't breathe.

He couldn't even remember if he'd given Hannibal an excuse before locking himself in the clean, tiled space and letting it fill with steam as he pressed his back to the door.

He probably hadn't.

Hannibal probably knew anyway, which made it worse.

Will sat in the bathroom and wept, sobbing like a child and unable to ground himself, until it was too steamy to comfortably breathe and gentle knuckles were knocking on the door. Will tried to wipe his eyes again and found that his sleeves were soaked with tears already, entirely ineffective against more. He swallowed another sob down and blinked rapidly at the ceiling.

"'M fine." He said.

"Will you let me in?"

Will considered, upper lip caught between his teeth. He didn't want to. He didn't need anyone seeing him like this, especially when he had no worldly idea of what had caused it. But at the same time the thought that he could open the door and Hannibal would be on the other side of it, not to belittle him but to pull him into an embrace, to hold him close, to let him —

Will slipped a little getting up, remembering, somehow, to turn the shower off, but when he opened the door and let the steam pour forth into their bedroom, he plastered himself against Hannibal's chest and clung to the lapels of his jacket.

"Sorry," he gritted out. "Sorry, I don't fucking know, I don't *fucking* know."

Hannibal's arms encircled him, holding Will tight to his body. A strangled sound worked its way up from Will's chest.

"I'm sorry," He said again, "I'm sorry, I don't know what—"

Hannibal shushed him. A hand cupped the nape of Will's neck, guiding his head down against Hannibal's shoulder. Will sucked in a lungful of Hannibal's cologne, mild and familiar.

"It's all right," Hannibal said. "I have you."

He didn’t say it the way it was normally said, a placating phrase used to soothe someone when you didn’t actually know how to help. Hannibal sounded genuine, as if he truly meant to wrap Will up and insulate him from the world. Will squeezed his eyes shut.

After a few minutes, during which Will’s shoulders crawled up around his ears and his hiccups eased to soft, hitching breaths, Hannibal began to maneuver them backwards. They ended up in bed, Will draped across Hannibal’s chest, Hannibal’s hands smoothing out the back of Will’s shirt in rhythmic motions.

“You have me,” Hannibal said. “If you need me, if you want me. You needn’t hide from me, Will.”

Will turned his red face into Hannibal’s throat. “It’s embarrassing,” he muttered. “I don’t know what came over me.”

“It’s perfectly human to feel emotions and express them,” Hannibal replied. Will snorted, though it was hardly a happy sound.

“Are you really psychoanalyzing me right now?”

“Merely stating a fact,” Hannibal told him. “I doubt there’s ever been a time in your life you have felt freer than you feel now. There’s no one to act for, here, nor to hide from. Your mind knows this subconsciously and is starting to let you express feelings you’ve long held barricaded.”

“Well it would be great if they could stop.”

Hannibal said nothing to that; Will said even less. Both knew this wasn’t a case of self-control, which Will had in spades. This was something *worse* in Will’s mind; this was vulnerability. And vulnerability got your ass kicked by the lockers, it got you fired from your job, it got Jack Crawford’s voice to raise so loud the windows shook with it. Vulnerability was weak. Pathetic. Unnecessary.

“I’m sorry I ruined dinner.”

“You ruined nothing,” Hannibal told him. “It will keep, should you find your appetite has left you.”

Will shook his head. No. He needed to get back to status quo, and that meant eating dinner together, drinking wine, sitting by the fireplace after with a finger of scotch speaking about nothing at all.

“No,” he said finally, pushing himself up off of Hannibal a little. “My wits might’ve left me for a bit, but my appetite is still very much here.”

Hannibal’s smile made Will feel warm all over.

“Good.” Was all he said.

After the Dragon and the harrowing few days holed up in a freezing little boathouse as they recovered from their more life-threatening wounds, they had made their way to Cuba. For a time— a long time — their names were in the papers. Speculation on TattleCrime, keyboard warriors analyzing what little facts and information they had access to from released crime scene photos, monotonous droning from the FBI representatives that they were *taking this case incredibly seriously* .

Then that eased. Then it stopped entirely.

He and Hannibal were free, at least for a time, to enjoy each other as they had not been able to for the duration of their courtship — because what else was it but a long engagement?

This was the honeymoon, and it was terrifying in its intimacy.

They went for walks on the beach, warmed by the setting sun. Will carried his shoes in his hands and let the tide wash over his feet. They talked of philosophy, of psychology. They carefully waded through the mistakes of their past, soothed over frayed nerves.

At home in their little bungalow, Hannibal cooked lavish meals, almost ridiculously extravagant for just the two of them. Will ate them with gusto, occasionally stealing an extra bite or two from Hannibal's plate.

And they…had sex? Made love? *Fucked?* Hannibal laid Will out on silk sheets and touched him with hands so gentle they almost hurt.

It *did* hurt. It hurt on the inside, in the tug at Will's chest. Hannibal took him to pieces, and afterwards, he held him so tightly that Will hardly dared to breathe.

"I can hardly stand it sometimes," Will whispered once in the afterglow. Hannibal pressed a kiss to his curls, humming softly.

"What?"

"The way you touch me."

Hannibal nuzzled him quietly, allowing Will's thoughts to sort themselves into an order he felt comfortable expressing in words.

"You touch me like I matter," Will said after a time. "Like it's a privilege for you to touch me, not a privilege for me to be touched by you."

Hannibal hadn't asked him if anyone else had ever touched Will this way; he knew the answer. Instead, he'd made it a point to always touch Will that way, whether they were intimate in bed or just brushing fingers in the hallway.

The touches, the meals, occasional trips out, new clothes, his space…more and more Hannibal insinuated himself into Will's life in a way that made Will feel valued.

Then the levee had just broken.

Will's tears became more frequent, and his frustration with them more violent. Hannibal had to fight every instinct in himself to explain these feelings to Will logically — he knew logic played zero part in emotional turmoil. Instead, he continued to devote himself unconditionally to Will until one day, helpless to another outburst, Will had screamed at him.

"Why are you doing this? What do you want from me?"

"Will—"

"Don't!" Will snapped. "Don't, I don't know why you—" He shook his head. "What are you *planning* ?"

"Nothing," Hannibal said.

"You have to be, there's no reason for you to—" Will cut himself off, turning his face away. Everyone always wanted something. Will certainly did, and so had everyone who'd ever reached out to Will. Molly, perhaps, had been kinder, but even she had wanted more from Will than he'd been capable of giving.

"Will," Hannibal said softly, "I only want for us to be happy."

He reached for Will then, pulling him in until Will had no choice but to tuck his head against Hannibal's shoulder.

"Stop," Will protested, pushing weakly at Hannibal's chest. "Stop, I don't want you to patronize me."

"I'm not patronizing you."

"But—"

"Have I ever done anything I didn't want to do, Will?"

"You went to prison," Will insisted, but it was a weak argument.

"Of my own volition," Hannibal reminded him.

"You stayed there for years, for—" Will swallowed thickly. "I was *horrible* to you."

"I hurt you," Hannibal replied in turn. After a while, the arguments died down. Will had nothing else to present to Hannibal that the other couldn't immediately counter.

And it wasn't just words. It was *actions.*

As the months wore on, Hannibal never once wavered from his care and kindness. He doted on Will so willingly, so eagerly, that slowly Will started to allow himself to believe that maybe it was genuine, maybe Hannibal *did* just want Will for Will, whatever that even meant anymore.

One evening, Will set his scotch aside,still full after an hour of fretting and worrying, and crawled very deliberately into Hannibal's lap. When the other looked askance, Will just sighed and tucked his face against his shoulder until Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will and held him close.

That was all he wanted. Just to be held. To be touched by someone who wanted to touch him, by someone who wanted to soothe him, by someone who thought Will was worth the time it took to just sit down and shut up with.

Will stayed there for a long time. It was hard not to. Hannibal's hands were so gentle where they smoothed over his back, his arms. And he was so warm, so comfortable.

By the time Hannibal finished his own drink, Will was drifting. He did not fall asleep, exactly, but he was drifting nonetheless. He had never been quite so cared for, so safe.

Hannibal set his glass aside, pressing a kiss to Will's cheek. "Would you indulge me in something?" he asked.

Will blinked dazedly. "Hmm?"

"I enjoy the opportunity to care for a partner," Hannibal said. "Would you allow me to bathe you?"

I'm not a child . The words were on the tip of Will's tongue. He almost voiced them, almost shut himself away just that little bit.

But he liked Hannibal's hands on him. He liked to be touched, to be held. And he liked a nice, hot bath.

"Okay," he said softly.

There was no ceremony about it. Will had wondered for a minute if Hannibal would make a big show of things, would carry Will there for some daft reason, or flutter around him as though he were incapable of taking care of himself.

But he did nothing of the sort. He let Will make his way up to the master bath on his own as he stoked the fire for the night and washed their glasses. By the time he made it upstairs, Will was halfway out of his clothes.

Hannibal kissed his cheek, nuzzling at the stubble that surrounded the shiny smooth scar the Dragon had left on him.

"How hot do you like it?"

Will sighed, shrugging. He wasn't sure. He'd never thought about it before. A bath was a bath, a way to get warm and get clean before getting out and going about his life again. But Hannibal didn't rush him for an answer, and he didn't make a decision for him. In the end, Will went with just-too-hot, because he felt like his very bones were aching.

Hannibal added some Epsom salts to help soothe tense muscles, some lavender oil for a pleasant and calming scent, and he got Will's towel onto the heating rack to be ready and warm for him when he got out.

Will hesitated when Hannibal didn't undress himself as well.

"Just me?"

"Do you want me to get in with you?" Hannibal asked. Will considered, his body turned aside to hide the worst of his scarring. Hannibal had seen it, of course, he'd left rather a few of the scars himself, but Will still felt that tug, that desperate urge to *hide it,* to remove all imperfections from sight.

He always wanted to be close to Hannibal. He'd just spend the better part of an hour curled up in his *lap* . But there was an urge tugging at him, ridiculous, selfish.

Will was sure that Hannibal would be fine with a little bit of selfishness. He'd encourage it, no doubt, with that same small smile he wore whenever he was pleased with Will.

And it would mean having all of Hannibal's attention squarely on him, something Will both loved and hated in equal measure.

Slowly, Will shook his head. Hannibal did indeed give him that small smile.

"Go ahead then, Will."

Flushed, feeling as though he was somehow getting away with something, Will climbed into the bath. It was scalding, perfectly so. He sank against the towel Hannibal folded up for him, head tilted back, water all the way up over his chest. Their tub was blissfully deep. Will thought he might drift off again.

He couldn't help but smile when Hannibal touched him. It was just a tickle of fingers against his throat but it somehow felt like *more* . He hummed, pleased, as Hannibal let his fingers trail in the water, spread and soothe over Will's chest. When he guided Will deeper into the tub and supported his head as he wet Will's curls with a cupped hand, Will bit his lip and brought his hands up to hide his face.

He was smiling too much. He felt goddamn giddy. And that was stupid, it was incredibly stupid, because all this was was a bath, just a goddamn bath.

That's all.

But was it?

Will couldn't remember the last time someone had bathed him. As a child, sure, and it had never crossed his mind as an adult because he was capable of washing himself, but no one had ever even offered. No sultry gaze as someone coaxed him into the shower after sex, no suggestion that they soak together in the tub with a cigarette shared between them.

Did people do this? Did they let someone else take care of such basic needs?

Hannibal's fingers worked shampoo into a lather against Will's scalp and he moaned, arching up out of the water a little before settling again. It felt like heaven.

Hannibal rinsed out the shampoo and let a conditioner sit in Will's hair, lathering up a washcloth.

The washcloth against Will's skin felt almost like Hannibal's hands. He shivered as the touches lingered over his chest, the cloth scraping almost teasingly against his nipples. He blinked sleepily at Hannibal, taking in the fondness of his smile, the intensity of his gaze.

When Hannibal reached Will's thighs, Will was already hard. He flushed, squeezing his legs together.

Hannibal spread them again, and Will found himself glancing away, unable to meet that intense look in his eyes. He cleared his throat.

"We should…We should finish up and go to bed," Will whispered .

"We don't have to," Hannibal told him. "I can take care of you right here."

"But then—" *then you won't get anything out of this.*

You won't get anything out of me.

It would be selfish. I'd be selfish.

Hannibal didn't let him finish, kissing Will's cheek as he let the cloth slip from his grasp into the water and stroked Will's cock with his bare hand instead.

"Then you'd be able to enjoy it here," Hannibal murmured, "where you're warm and relaxed."

His other hand moved to cup Will's face and tilt it up until they were kissing properly, Will's little moans caught and swallowed by Hannibal's eager mouth. He didn't care that Will got his shirt wet when he draped a dripping arm up over Hannibal's shoulders to pull him close. He didn't care that they'd need to move to the shower soon, together, once the water was ruined. He cared only that Will was bucking up against Hannibal's hand and *taking* his pleasure, one knee pressed up to the side of the tub and the other leg outstretched, toes spread in desperate aching need.

"Hannibal," Will bit his lip and trembled, thighs tensing, squeezing around Hannibal's hand where he stroked him. "Please, *God* that feels good."

"I've got you," Hannibal whispered, nuzzling Will's cheek as he watched his own hand distorted by the water move faster over Will. "Daddy's got you."

Will's orgasm felt like a kick to the gut. It hit hard and quick and left him breathless and shaking, cheeks florid with color because of that *word* that had no reason to be used between them, that had no *right* to make Will feel this way.

After, Hannibal drained the bathwater and pulled Will to his feet. Will went, wordless, frozen.

“Why—” he finally said, once Hannibal had pulled him under the shower spray to rinse the conditioner free from his hair. His words failed him, lost to the pleasant sensation of strong fingers against his scalp.

“Do I need a reason?” Hannibal asked. “It pleases me to take care of you. It pleases you to be taken care of.”

“I don’t need to be taken care of,” Will told him.

“I find life to be very dull if I do only what I need,” Hannibal told him. Will flushed, ducking his head. He reached between them, but Hannibal caught his hand.

“Let this be about *you* ,” he said. “Perhaps once we’re in bed, if you’re feeling up to it, you can allow me to indulge myself in you again. But for now, this is enough.”

How could it be enough?

How could Will *be enough?*

He never had been before, not for all his more-than-forty years, not for anyone, not even for Molly — and he had tried so hard for Molly.

By the time they left the shower, Will felt so soft and sleepy, so entirely relaxed that he didn’t even complain when Hannibal tucked him into bed and tucked himself up behind him, keeping Will close and sheltered and covered and safe.

He must have dozed, because when he woke, he was curled around Hannibal instead, draped over him in comfortable repose as the other breathed slowly and evenly in rest.

Daddy.

Will didn’t think he’d ever even called his father Daddy as a little boy. Always Dad, then his name, because they had nothing much to talk about but cutting ties felt like a cop out. And now this. Daddy. A word filled with as much innuendo as genuine softness. A comfort. A protection. A guarantee of want and value, because who else would want their child more, value their child more than their parents?

Perhaps that was the life other kids had led. Other kids who were not Will Graham.

Daddy’s got you.

The truth of the statement was hard to escape, so Will decided not to try anymore. Why did the word need any more weight than its already heavy meaning?

It was very early in the morning. The polite thing to do would have been to roll back over and try to slip back into sleep. Instead, Will pressed his mouth to Hannibal’s jaw, his cheek.

Hannibal was a light sleeper. His arms came up to wrap around Will, holding him close. "What are you up to?" he asked, his voice low and rumbling.

Will flushed. "I just…I wanted…"

Hannibal rolled them both, settling his body between Will's thighs. "You can have whatever you want," he assured Will. His lips found Will's throat, working kisses down to his collarbone, then lower, lower, and lower until Will was squirming with need.

Hannibal parted Will's thighs, his chest flat to the bed as he pulled Will's knees over his shoulders. Will stared down at him, wide-eyed, red-faced.

This was what he wanted, exactly so, yet as Hannibal lowered his head to mouth at the crease of Will's inner thigh, Will could barely wrap his head around it.

Sex had been pleasurable, sure, but it had never been about Will. Will was the body used for his partner to enjoy herself with, nothing more. If Will got something out of it, then it was a bonus, but hardly the goal. Will would take vague pride in being called an attentive lover, or a selfless lover, but it never felt real to him. Sex was something done to him, not with him.

But with Hannibal…with Hannibal sex was about mutual pleasure, about each partner being driven mad with desire for the other. Will wasn't naive enough to think that had he ventured out to have partners of the same sex earlier he would have found such devotion, but it did cross his mind sometimes.

Maybe it was just that. Maybe it was that they were both men who knew what felt good and how to get the other off.

After their first time together, Will had buried his face in the pillows and wept. It had been too overwhelming, too *good,* and he couldn't believe it was actually happening to him. With him. He wasn't just a toy, used and set aside until next time, he was being read like a book by a man who wanted nothing more than to learn Will inside and out.

And now, as Hannibal spread Will's legs wider and nuzzled against Will's hole with a hum of pleasure, Will dropped his head back against the pillows and tugged Hannibal's hair with a sigh. Hannibal would take his sweet time, would devour Will until he was shaking and unable to make any sounds other than whimpers and sobs of need. He would be selfish, in showing Will how selfless pleasure could be.

Long, slow licks, to start. Will shuddered all the way down to his toes. He'd only experienced this a handful of times, but each time, Hannibal treated him like a feast to be savored. He devoured Will, and Will *relished* it.

He dug his heels into Hannibal's back, arching his own, gasping, panting. In this, he couldn't help himself. Selfishness was no longer a choice. His body took over, and he was wild beneath him.

It was usually a prelude, a warm up. Will was impatient, and he didn't know how to share a bed without sharing more of himself. Usually, after a few moments, self-consciousness would

overtake him, and Will would tug at Hannibal's arms, pulling him up and over to the next step.

But something in Will rebelled, today. He wanted, he *wanted* , and he knew now he could have it.

"Daddy," Will gasped. The words cracked in his mouth, uncertain, shaky.

And Hannibal *moaned* , flush up against his skin.

"Daddy!" Will said again, louder, more demanding.

Hannibal slid an arm under Will's lower back and hoisted him closer, arching him up, opening Will further to his mouth's explorations. His tongue slid into Will and the other shuddered in pleasure around him, his moans deep and aching with need. When Will dropped a hand down to grasp Hannibal's hair painfully tight, Hannibal took the hint and pressed *deeper* .

It was rare he could have Will so pliant beneath him, he was usually impatient in his need to prove that he was here for more than just lying back and taking something without giving back. Now, Hannibal relished Will's desire for this, his demand for it. He wanted to pull back and reassure him, but actions spoke louder, actions meant more, so Hannibal buried himself between Will's legs and ate him out until Will's breathing hitched and he squeezed his thighs around Hannibal's head.

"God, oh God," Will pressed his free hand against his eyes, teeth gritted in pleasure as he rocked his hips down in deliberate, needy shoves against Hannibal's tongue. He rode him with abandon, cursing and whimpering and *aching* for Hannibal, for *Daddy* to make him feel good as his cock leaked copiously against his stomach, down his length and to where Hannibal devoured him.

"Hannibal—" he gasped, eyes hazy and unseeing, heart beating so loudly against his ears. "Han- Daddy…let me…let me come, please let me come, please—"

Over and over, a whispered and whimpered little mantra as Will held Hannibal down against himself and took his pleasure of the man's clever tongue.

Hannibal didn't answer verbally, but he gave Will everything he could. Will writhed, eyes shut, body tense. He was tightening, he was rigid, everything was turning and turning until he couldn't turn any further.

And then he shattered, flew apart at the seams, Hannibal's name on his lips.

And Hannibal kept going.

He touched Will until he was gasping, he took him to pieces over, and over, until Will's fingers were claws against his scalp. When he finally set him free, Will collapsed to the bed, gasping.

Hannibal wiped his mouth on the sheets, coming up to brace himself over Will. Will blinked up at him. He had never felt so relaxed, so cherished.

“Daddy,” he said, in awe of his own daring, “Daddy, will you fuck me now?”

Hannibal pressed his lips to Will’s cheek, his big hands spreading Will’s thighs so wide, fitting himself between them.

They didn’t get out of bed until early afternoon, and then only to get something to eat and use the restroom and clean up a bit before they were back. Hannibal made love to Will until he was sobbing with it, until he was clinging close and nuzzling against Hannibal, wanting to be small and protected and adored.

Hannibal made them a simple dinner and they ate it in bed.

It was perhaps a week later that Hannibal was woken by ardent, needy kisses to his throat again, but this time Will didn’t want to be coddled, he wanted to be fucked. He shoved his hands against Hannibal’s chest and bared his teeth with a playful growl before straddling the man’s hips.

“I’m going to ride you,” Will announced, to Hannibal’s deep pleasure. “And you’re going to watch.”

Hannibal’s only answer was to drape his arms over his head and let Will have his way with him.

Will didn’t tease, he didn’t playfully work Hannibal up. He reached for the lube and stretched himself only as much as he needed before coating Hannibal’s cock with slick and sank down on it with a groan.

He was beautiful.

When Will allowed himself to feel the full extent of the pleasure his body could offer, he was radiant. He shifted against Hannibal until he was just where Will wanted him. He set a pace that was relentless and stroked his own cock leisurely as he did. His free hand moved to tease his own nipples, rather than offering Hannibal some reprieve.

Today Hannibal was the toy, the one used for Will’s pleasure, and Will abandoned himself to the adrenaline and endorphins. When he came over Hannibal’s stomach, he was shaking, gazing down at the man with hooded eyes and a crooked grin before reaching out to spread the mess up to Hannibal’s chest. He leaned over him, kissing Hannibal deep, cupping his face with his damp hand, and grinned.

“You haven’t come yet,” he pointed out. Hannibal hummed the affirmative. “I should get back to riding then, shouldn’t I?”

Hannibal couldn’t help the soft noise he made as his hands cupped Will’s hips. Will had no idea how radiant he was like this, how much Hannibal loved to see him demanding. Taking

pleasure as if it were his right, because it was. Demanding Hannibal's pleasure as an offering rather than giving it as a gift.

After, he turned sweet again, almost shy. He curled up alongside Hannibal, his nose tucked to Hannibal's shoulder. Hannibal held him close, tracing gentle patterns along his side.

"I've been thinking," Will said after a while, his voice muffled by Hannibal's shoulder. Hannibal hummed softly, encouraging. "About your art," Will added.

They hadn't sought anyone out since they'd left America. Hannibal's hand stilled on Will's flank.

"I've been contemplating new pieces," Hannibal offered. "I've merely been waiting for the right canvas."

Will shifted, propping himself up on his side. He looked down at Hannibal, his lower lip pulled between his teeth. "What if I picked one for you?"

Hannibal's expression eased into a languid smile and he blinked slowly up at his Will. Then he brought a hand up to gently stroke his knuckles over Will's face, thumbing his bottom lip before dropping his hand to the bed again.

"What if you did?" He mused back. Will blinked.

"You'd let me do that?"

"I'd trust no one's taste more," Hannibal admitted. Will turned his head against his shoulder and regarded Hannibal a moment more. Then he settled against his chest again with a sigh and said nothing else about it.

The first time Will had gifted Hannibal a kill, Will had been forced into it. He had brought down a beast that had hurt his pack, that would seek to kill him, and returned it to the master who had sent it. There had been victory there, but only slight. It didn't feel genuine; it didn't feel good.

Not really.

Nothing like the second time Will gifted Hannibal a kill.

This man had not put on a skeleton of a creature he saw himself as, this man merely hid behind the mask of a false humanity. Will had been following some stories in the paper, the smaller articles, way down the back where they would more often be missed. Abuse, constant and consistent, a terrorization of an entire neighborhood that wasn't rich enough to make the front page.

Those lives lost didn't sell papers.

They caught Will's attention instead.

He delivered the man gagged and bound to their dining room table and wiped sweat from his brow as he called for Hannibal to come up from the cellar. Will listened to the pace of his footsteps, read from the sound alone the moment of realization, acceptance, pride. He smiled when Hannibal kissed his temple, wrapped his arms around his middle, pulled Will in close.

“Unspeakably rude,” Will offered as his only explanation. The man was unconscious, not dead; Will had wanted to leave the killing to the professional. “Unspeakably ugly.”

“A beautiful gift, then,” Hannibal said.

“A present,” Will said, “for you.”

The man on the table squirmed, made a sound. Will ignored him. He didn’t matter.

What mattered was Hannibal, beaming down at Will with something akin to pride. Hannibal, pressing a kiss to the corner of Will’s mouth.

“Show me,” Will breathed. “Show me what you want to do for me. Make me something beautiful, Daddy.”

End Notes

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Querencia
(n.): a place from where one's strength is drawn, where one feels at home, the place you are your most authentic self.

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